COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: A DIVERSITY OF VOICES

Giving Space to African Voices

Rights in Local Languages and Local Curriculum

Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite (Ed.)

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Giving Space to African Voices

Comparative and International Education:
A Diversity of Voices

Volume 33

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Giving Space to African Voices

Rights in Local Languages and Local Curriculum

Edited by

Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite

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ZEHLIA BABACI-WILHITE

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this book was conceived at the Comparative and International Education Society conference (CIES) in San Juan, Puerto Rico, USA in 2012. At that time, I was working on my PhD at the University of Oslo. On completion of the PhD entitled *Languages in Schooling as a Right in Education A Case Study of Curriculum Reform in Zanzibar* in 2013, the idea came to mind to share my work in a volume with contributions from other African voices. As a Berber from Algeria with an authentic African culture it seemed natural to take on the role of Editor.

The contributions to this book *Giving Space to African Voices* demonstrate the linkages between local languages, local curriculum, quality learning and rights in education. The authors argue that local 'indigenous' languages and a locally-grounded curriculum in schooling are essential to ensure African childrens' rights in education. In many African countries, the goal of right to education is becoming increasingly remote, let alone that of rights in education. With this understanding and with the awareness of internal inefficiency of education and millions of out-of-school students throughout Africa, rights in education remains a distant goal. The key contribution of the book is the contention that rights in education must be protected and preserved and that this cannot be accomplished without valuing local languages, combating universalism, unlocking capability deprivation and rejecting the "hegemonic" and "neocolonialist" languages of Europe and North America.

Even if the desire for English is the goal of education for many African countries, the fact that local Language of Instruction (LoI) would produce better results should, logically, inform decisions in education language policy. Unfortunately, government officials in many countries continue to make decisions based on political considerations, rather than on considerations related to improving the quality of education for optimal learning environments. There is a persistent blind-faith reliance on English. Despite the overwhelming scientifically-based evidence, English as a LoI continues to be required at all educational levels in many developing nations. Instead of focusing on improved quality, the productivity-based and standardized elements of policy are disempowering communities and disregarding classroom realities. Policy makers are in a position to work towards a quality education for all as part of a more comprehensive right-based approach. The contributions of this volume form a solid basis for a reevaluation of education policies, emphasizing the richness of local languages and culture and contributing to a realization of social justice.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The contributions are organized into three main parts: Localization of Instruction and Curriculum Development, Linguistic Rights in Education and Right to Education.

The first part ***Localization of Instruction and Curriculum Development*** includes a description and analysis of the knowledge taught in schools, the challenges of decontextualizing knowledge, as well as discussions of curriculum reforms in several countries in Africa.

In the first chapter entitled "*Localization of Instruction as a Right in Education: Tanzania and Nigeria*", ***Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite*** and ***Macleans A. Geo-JaJa*** question educational decisions made in Tanzania and Nigeria by reviewing the language-in-education policies in both countries. We explore the redefinition of schooling values by analyzing critically the theories, policies and implications for both learning in the global sphere and maintaining cultural identity through localizing the educational curriculum, particularly the use of local languages in education as a right in education. The results of this study are important because they contribute to our understanding of quality education and children's confidence in their community, but also to their ability to understand and engage with the world on their own terms. We conclude that a rethink in education in Africa is necessary as a right in education.

In his chapter entitled "*Language, Learning, And Education For All in Africa*" ***Sam Mchombo*** provides examples of language of instruction and content of education in Africa as an issue that continues to engage researchers and policy makers. He addresses the question of how to improve academic success in schools, as well as how to counter the legacy of cultural and intellectual inferiority that resulted from the long period of colonialism, responsible for the virtual elimination of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems from the curriculum as well as the use of African languages as mediums of instruction. The recommendations include the use of African languages in education and the incorporation of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems into the curricula to complement World Knowledge Systems. This enhances preservation of human rights and democratic practice in education. This chapter is a contribution to the narrative that interrogates the efficacy and utility of the use of foreign languages as mediums of instruction in African educational programs.

The chapter by ***Abel G. Ishumi*** entitled "*Voices in Development Struggles in the South: Experiences in Education In Tanzania, 1961-2011*" gives a historical analysis of changes in the Tanzanian education system from 1961 to 2011, reminding us of the period when Nyerere took over the mantle of leadership of a new nation back in 1961. It was clear to him that education—in various forms and dimensions—was to be one of the most urgent matters to deal with in order to uplift the bulk of the population, ranging from children and young people to illiterate adults. This chapter is divided into three major parts that typify voices of varying dimensions over a fifty-year period of the history of education since independence in 1961. Each of these periods of education provision in the country was characterized by certain trends that produced the kind of voices that emerged in response to the policy stimuli of the time.

The chapter of ***Ousseina Alidou*** entitled "Shaping Muslim Curriculum in Kenya" addresses the body of research that highlights the educational gap in Muslim communities in Kenya, arguing that very few studies have made an attempt to examine community-based driven solutions to addressing these problems. This chapter focuses on the latter aspect by examining the pioneering work of a senior Muslim educationist woman in Kenya commonly known as Bi Swafiya Muhashamy-Said who designed a curricular reform at the nursery level that takes into account both linguistic and cultural heritage of the students in addition to the developmental aspiration of the targeted communities. Her curricular reform commonly known as integrated *madrasa* curriculum presents an alternative to both the traditional Qur'anic school, which does not respond to the competitive demands of modernity, and the neoliberal secular nursery school system, which is unaffordable by the majority and which culturally alienates Muslim children.

The second part of the book is entitled ***Right to Quality Education.***

The chapters in this section address the issue of quality and equity in education. ***Samir Amin*** sets the tone with his chapter entitled "*Rights to Quality Education*" questioning who benefits from the educational system and how we can stop the neo-liberalist commodification of education in the name of globalization. He analyses the right to education as a fundamental human right. True equality in access to a quality education has never been incorporated into our society. It has been substituted with "equal opportunity". Such a society is by definition anti-democratic. However the history of the struggles for democratization in education, with a view to promoting systematic means intended to reduce inequalities, was not always missing. The reactionary offensive comes naturally with a unilateral definition of the objective of education: produce humans "instrumental" for the functioning of the system. He writes that excellence is here synonymous with the achievement of excellence in disaster.

The chapter of ***Justinian C. J. Galabawa*** entitled "*Enhancing Capacities For Improving Quality Education Assessment Practices*" focuses on the need for African countries to enhance their capacities for improving quality education assessment as a right to learners. To be able to do this they must address the following; (i) the economy-wide context of educational assessment (ii) the need to change course from traditional goals of assessment to new local goals that reflect international demands/ practices (iii) movement(s) from central assessment to inclusive de-centralised capacity-building practices at district and school level (iv) taking lessons from "outcomes" literature and current frameworks (v) Assessing their own practices to be able to come up with strategic policy directions.

The chapter by ***Ladislaus Semali*** entitled "*Rethinking Quality Education in Tanzania's Classrooms*" examines the educational reform movement designed to improve quality education for all children in Tanzania. The notion of 'quality' carries significant meaning and at the same time lacks specifics. It is relative, and perhaps the complexity creates difficulty for grasping significance when the criteria for "monitoring" are unknown. Speaking of "quality education" in the polarized

climate of education reform, on the one hand advocating "inclusion" "equality," and "participation;" and on the other hand valuing "individual capabilities" can be challenging; and serious acceptance of either perspective requires more closely defining "quality" and the measures that assure quality. This chapter proposes curriculum integration of local knowledge, informal science and the history of science in classrooms as a case to enhance quality of education in Tanzania.

The final chapter of the section is by

Jerome Ikechukwu Okonkwo *entitled "Appropriate Language Rights to Education: The Strategy for National Development in Nigeria"* calls for urgent interventions questioning the problems in Nigeria - and the challenges facing the question of responsibility which have not only drastically affected effective delivery of the type of education good for sustainable development in the country, but have massively crippled the nation as a system. The authors argues that with this critical condition and state of affairs of the educational sector in Nigeria, the Nigerians are certain that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2015-2020 targets are mere '*Fata Morgana'*. The concern of this chapter is on the implications of language as it pertains to appropriateness for Nigeria and Nigerians for the valuable education and consequent national development.

The third part of the book is entitled ***Linguistic Rights in Education.*** The authors take on the debate regarding what language for identity and social justice. In addition, covered in this section is the issue of ensuring the conditions of language of instruction, so that people take positive actions to turn education into actual capabilities for change and sustainable development. The question as to whether the use of African languages or English as a language of instruction in schools impairs the quality of education and endangers children's rights in education is important in this section.

In their chapter, entitled "*Examining Ugandan and Malawian Language of Instruction Policies From a Linguistic Human Rights Perspective*" ***Ismael S. Gyagenda*** and ***Wardah M. Raja-Gyagenda*** focus on the language of instruction (LoI) policies of Uganda and Malawi. After their independence, Uganda and Malawi have experienced totally different political paths. Since its independence in 1962, Uganda has gone through military rule and civil wars and has changed rulers nine times. Malawi, on the other hand, was ruled by one president for thirty years from 1964 to 1994 and has since had 3 leaders through peaceful and constitutional transfers of power. This chapter seeks to examine the LoI policies of the two countries from a human rights perspective. The authors also seek to explore how the desire in both countries for establishing a LoI policy as a mechanism for building cultural/ national consciousness intersected with the implementation challenges and realities of economics, politics, and local tribal rivalries.

In her chapter entitled "*Violation of Linguistic Rights In Education: Its Effects On Tanzanian Education System and Work Places*" ***Julitha C. John*** explores how language rights have been violated in Tanzanian schools and their effect of this in the education system and in the work places. It starts by theorizing language rights, and

then goes on to show how these rights have been dishonored in the education system by looking at the language policy. This chapter argues that the efforts to guarantee and practice language rights in Tanzania have become unsuccessful leading to the problem of recycling poor English language proficiency in schools through teachers with very limited English language proficiencies and further to the producion of graduates who are poor in the language skills. Finally the chapter recommends a review of the language policy, conducting English language training in schools and colleges and the use of English clubs, debate clubs, academic writing seminars and projects and excursions as ways to improve language skills.

The chapter by ***Maryam J. Ismail*** entitled "*Infusing A Rights In Education In Initial Teacher Education In Postcolonial Zanzibar*" analyzes the value of the right-based approach in the program of initial education of teachers. Empirical studies in Zanzibar have demonstrated that each year, most Zanzibari are confronted with disappointing national examination results. Despite the surge of disappointments in education, the number of students who are aspiring to become teachers of English is increasing exponentially. The chapter therefore presents, from a critical insiders' perspective, an empirical study of an initial teacher education program in postcolonial Zanzibar. The chapter argues that if the goal of second language teacher education program is to prepare effective language teachers, it can be concluded that the Right Based Approach (RBA) has the potential to serve as a valuable framework for teacher educators and their students in initial teacher education. The implications for prospective teachers, graduate teachers and those who prepare future teachers are discussed.

The final chapter by ***Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite*** entitled "The Local and the Global in Zanzibar´s Educational Policy: Implications for Children´s Rights in Education" explores the consequences of linguistic choices for quality education and children's rights in education. The analysis centers on a case study of a curriculum change in Zanzibar in which English has replaced Kiswahili as the language of instruction in the last year of primary school in Mathematics and Science subjects. In making the curriculum change, Zanzibari policy makers have been influenced by the still powerful notion throughout Africa that learning in a Western language will promote development and modernization. From the perspective of a rights-capability-based approach, this curriculum change violates Zanzibari children's right in education. Local languages need to be valued in education in order that children will be prepared for engaging with the world in a language they understand. Improving science literacy was one of the main objectives. An assumption embedded in the Zanzabari curriculum change was that a switch from Kiswahili to English in mathematics and science would result in an improvement in learning. This assumption was fallacious for a number of reasons outline in the chapter.

The book ends with a poem by ***Francisco Gomes de Matos*** reminding us of Paulo Freire`s legacy in World Education Rights and contribution to critical pedagogy. This poem is a fitting closing that captures the sentiments of the book.

BIRGIT BROCK-UTNE[1]

FOREWORD: PART OF THE SOLUTION

All of the contributors to this volume come from Africa, though some of them do not live there now. That in itself is impressive. In the LOITASA[2] project we made a point out of publishing our results in Africa, every second book in Tanzania and every second book in South Africa. There is so little publishing of academic books going on in Africa and so little support of publishing companies that we found this was the right thing to do. The problem was getting these books to the North and having the valuable contributions being read also in the industrialized countries. We were fortunate in meeting a Canadian, Alan Pitman, who had read all of the first four LOITASA books and wanted to take chapters from these books to produce a book which would be more easily available in the west (Brock-Utne et al, 2010).

In the Languages and Education in Africa (LEA) conference held at the University of Oslo in June 2006 all of five key-note speakers were Africans (Brock-Utne and Skattum 2009). So were most of the participants. In a plenary discussion focusing on the question of why the African languages were not used as languages of instruction one of the participants said: "We cannot solely put the blame on the donors. The African elite must also take part of the blame. And let us face it, we who are here belong to the elite. We are part of the problem." Another African participant took the floor and said: "Yes, that is correct. We intellectuals are part of the problem. But we are also part of the solution." I think this is correct. A language revolution in Africa will have to come from the elites, from the African academics even though they belong to the "North" in the "South". The women's movement, fighting for the rights of working class women, was started by middle class women, women who had more time to read, reflect and organize. Most of the African academics know that the majority of Africans cannot learn well if the learning is going to take place in a language they do not master. Some defend this system, which may be in the immediate interest of their own children, but not beneficial to their country, to the majority of people or to the economic growth of Africa. No country has developed on the basis of a foreign language, a language mastered only by a small elite.

African academics fighting for the right of African pupils to have instruction in their mother tongue, or at least a familiar African language, are not only fighting against other African members of the elite, the donors and publishing interests in the industrialized countries but also against misconceptions held by many parents and lay-people as well as some politicians. Parents in the so-called Francophone Africa want their children to be good in French. They wrongly assume that the best way

to achieve this is to have French as the language of instruction. We find the same misconception among parents in the so-called Anglophone Africa. In both cases children would learn faster and better had they been taught in their own language and learnt French and/or English as foreign languages, as subjects taught by teachers who are good at teaching these foreign languages.

There is an unfounded belief in many so-called Anglophone countries in Africa that mathematics and science are best taught in English and not in an African language, the language pupils and teachers normally speak and master much better than English. In a recent article examples of this are given from Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Ghana (Brock-Utne, 2013). The African examples are contrasted with examples from some Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Malaysia. The reintroduction of English from the 5th grade in primary school in mathematics and science in the Kiswahili speaking island of Zanzibar is discussed at some length in the article (also discussed in this book in the chapters by Babaci-Wilhite and Ismail). The attitudes of parents, which are built on the misconception that the best way to learn English is to have it as a language of instruction are analysed. Parental misconceptions can, however, be altered. There is a big teaching task ahead for African intellectuals who do not want to be part of the problem, but part of the solution. This book can be seen as an attempt by Africans to get closer to a solution to the biggest educational problem there is in Africa, the fact that children do not understand what the teacher is saying.

NOTES

[1] Birgit.brock-utne@iped.uio.no, Professor of Education and Development at the University of Oslo, founder of the Master of Comparative and International Education study at that university, professor around the world (Tanzania, Japan, New Zealand, the US, Sweden, Austria, Spain) consultant at EDCON (Education and Development CONsulting), author of many books and articles within the field of education and development and peace studies. http://www.uv.uio.no/pfi/english/people/aca/bbrock/index.html

[2] The LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project was a research project, which took place from 2002 through 2012. Nine books were published from the project, four were published in Tanzania, four in South Africa and one was published by Sense (Brock-Utne et al, 2010).

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PART I

LOCALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

ZEHLIA BABACI-WILHITE & MACLEANS A. GEO-JAJA

LOCALIZATION OF INSTRUCTION AS A RIGHT IN EDUCATION: TANZANIA AND NIGERIA LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION´S POLICIES

Who goes to school? Who succeeds in school and a nation development depends on language of instruction. "Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights (UNESCO, 2010)".

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will explore the relationship between choice of Language of Instruction (LoI) and quality learning, as well as the implications of this choice for children's rights in education. We raise the question of why two African countries, Tanzania and Nigeria are disregarding evidence that local LoI is essential for both learning and identity. Our intention is to contribute new perspectives to policy debates concerning language choices in education. We base our analysis on a review of current government policies in education and recent research both in Tanzania and Nigeria on language-in-education policies and how these policies are being implemented. We examine why English is preferred over local languages as LoI and the implications for quality learning and equity. We hope to contribute to a more informed understanding of why African countries are still choosing a global language such as English, French or Portuguese as LoI, a choice that does not permit countries to localize their educational curriculum. We will argue that the choice of a local language is essential to quality learning and the satisfaction of children's rights in education.

Tanzania is an interesting choice for study because it is one of the few countries in Africa that has chosen an African language, Kiswahili as its official national language and has chosen to use it as a LoI in primary school. Today, Kiswahili is the principle means of communication among different ethnic groups in Tanzania and within the government. Kiswahili has the status of both a community language and a national language. The achievement of this status has been assisted by different policies that directly or indirectly facilitate the development of Kiswahili, such as government-funded structures (Mulokozi, 2008). Currently Kiswahili is used as a LoI in elementary schools but not in secondary schools. Nigeria is chosen as a comparative case because it uses another model in which one of the three major languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba are used as a regional language for their

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respective regions and as a LoI in primary school. In both countries the use of these local languages is under threat by both internal and external political forces.

Our theoretical focus is on the explanatory power of theories related to human rights to explore the change in LoI and its consequences. This theoretical framework incorporates the importance of local context, using a local language and emphasizing the development of local capacity on local terms. Such a multiple approach emphasizes the importance of indigenous concepts, articulated in their natural environment. Before exploring these learning and rights issues, we provide historical background on debates about language in schools in Tanzania and Nigeria. We conclude that any local curriculum that ignores local languages and contexts risks a loss of learning quality and a violation of children's rights in education.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE DEBATES ABOUT LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS

In Tanzania

Prior to the Berlin conference of 1884, Africa was as advanced, and possibly even more advanced than any part of the world with highly developed governance and education systems (Babaci-Wilhite & Geo-JaJa, 2011). In pre-colonized African communities each social group was educated in its own language. During the colonial period in Tanzania (1885-1962), education was formalized and the use of colonial languages as a LoI was promoted by both colonial administrators and Christian missionaries (Kimizi, 2007, p. 1). A reaction to this change began in the early 20th century, as African pride and the quest for self-determination began to take shape. In East Africa, a movement to promote Kiswahili began in the 1930s. Between 1930 and 1964 an Inter-territorial Language Committee promoted the standardization and development of Kiswahili in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Kiswahili was chosen in Tanzania as the national language to unite the linguistically diverse groups in both countries after independence. In 2003, Kiswahili became one of the official languages of the African Union. This was a major achievement towards self-actualization. In 1967, the National Kiswahili Council was founded by a government act. It was given a budget and a staff with the mandate to develop Kiswahili and make sure the language would be used properly in the media. This effort has been very successful.

In 1967 Kiswahili became the medium of instruction throughout the primary school system in Tanzania. At the end of the 1970s President Julius K. Nyerere appointed a Presidential Commission on Education to review the entire education system. The Commission recommended changing the LoI in secondary schools to Kiswahili from January 1985 and in universities from 1991. However, in August 1983 the Minister of Education declared that the Ministry was not yet ready for the change. The implementation of Kiswahili was delayed; nonetheless, in 1997 the government categorically reaffirmed its intention to make the change to Kiswahili

(Mulokozi, 2008). By 2009, the policy had still not been implemented and in fact was reversed by the Education and Training Policy of 2009 (not yet adopted), which suggests that even government primary schools may choose English as the LoI.

The work of promoting Kiswahili was continued at the Institute of Kiswahili Research (IKR-TUKI) at the University of Dar es Salaam. In the 1980s the government gave consideration to implementing Kiswahili as a LoI, but in the end did not follow through at all levels. The excuse was that Kiswahili was not ready to be a LoI in secondary schools because of a lack of books and the terminology needed to teach science subjects. In an interview with Babaci-Wilhite, the Chief Academic Officer at the National Kiswahili Council (2008) affirmed that "In the 1980s those arguments were ok, but now they are using the same argument even if everything is ready". She further stated that since 1980's both book publishers and the National Kiswahili Council have engaged in the development of scientific terminology. She argued that Tanzania has enough dictionaries now. This raises the question of why a country does not use its language when it has developed all the necessary terminology and materials.

Turning to Zanzibar (which merged with Tanganayika in 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania), a recent decision by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) ordered a switch from Kiswahili[1] to English in the subjects of Mathematics and Science from Grade 5 from 2014 (Babaci-Wilhite, 2013a). In doing so it disregarded the overwhelming results of several research projects attributing the use of a local LoI to quality learning in Tanzania, (see Brock-Utne, 2007; Qorro, 2009; Babaci-Wilhite, 2010), Further, this decision was made despite the fact that in Zanzibar, Kiswahili is the mother tongue of 99% of the population (Kimizi, 2007). The switch to English as LoI was made in conjunction with a more comprehensive curriculum change, examined by Babaci-Wilhite (2013b). She studied the preparations for the implementation, the capacity for teachers to create a quality learning environment and how the new curriculum will affect equal access and quality education. The result of her study confirmed that the replacement of Kiswahili with English in the final primary grade will not contribute to an improvement in the learning of Zanzibari children. The pressures in Zanzibar and elsewhere in Tanzania to use English in Mathematics and Science subjects is a reflection of how much attention those subjects are now receiving in the international community, and how nations are forced to balance their desire to gird students for the global job market against issues of rights in education.

In Nigeria

Nigeria shares Tanzania's British colonial legacy. Formal education in a Nigerian language, Aku (Yoruba) began in 1831 in the Western Region of Nigeria. Not much progress has been made in introducing Nigerian languages as LoI, despite the 1926 Education Edict of the Colonial Government, and the many noble sentiments of

indigenous Federal and State Governments, as well as valiant activities of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (Emananjo, 2008).

Nigeria has a Language Development Centre called the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council. At this centre a large body of scientific literature has been developed in mother tongue in order to facilitate the use of the appropriate scientific words, terms and phrases. The 1989 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Federal, State and Local Governments should give automatic scholarships to students of languages. The in-service training for serving teachers of languages in tertiary institutions should be up to the postgraduate level and tertiary institutions should train language teachers through staff development programs and exchange of teachers between States and between institutions. These viable policies were only paid lip services to by government. Bamgbose (1982) has correctly identified the many barriers against effective education in West African languages in general and Nigerian languages in particular. Emananjo (2008) argues that a key constraint is an assumption that literacy is the ability to speak and write English and this fallacy is strongest among the Southern Nigerian elite. However, after over 200 years of English in Nigeria, less than 20% of Nigerians are able to speak and write English (ibid).

The Six-Year Primary Project (SYPP), which started in 1970 and was based at the prestigious Institute of Education at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), started in a rural school, setting up two experimental classes and one control class. In the control class, students used Yoruba as LoI throughout the six years of primary education. The results of this project have confirmed that those who have their total primary education in their Mother Tongue (MT) have proved more resourceful and better academically prepared. "The SYPP children have demonstrated greater manipulative ability in their relationship to their colleagues, they also tend to demonstrate a great sense of maturity, tolerance and other affective qualities that make them integrate easily and readily with those they come in contact with" (Fafunwa et al. 1989, p. 141). In terms of pure academic attestation, results show consistently that the experimental group performed highest on tests of all subjects including English. The research of the University of Ife SYPP shows that people learn faster and better in their first language. Clearly this outcome demonstrates that language policy is a significant contributor to quality learning in an educational system. Further, the impact is still underestimated despite research proving the correct choice of language to be essential. Consequently, to achieve functional literacy, it is imperative for Nigerians to be re-educated on the place of language in the teaching and learning process as well as reforming curriculum to be consistent with national needs in their system of education. For example, the SYPP project enabled a strengthening of the learning process and also enriched the curriculum by developing materials in Yoruba. This two-pronged process of education formulation resulted in a more and effective teaching of English as a subject through the use of specialist teachers of English (Geo-JaJa, 2009). Furthermore, Bamgbose (1982) posits that if children are educated in an indigenous language, this would satisfy both

the letter and the spirit of Section 1, Paragraph 8 of Nigerian Policy of Education (NPE), which states:

> In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process, and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the Government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the Government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba.

The NPE (1977, revised in 1982, 1998, 2004) is the educational blueprint of the Federal Government of Nigeria which stipulates the government stand on which languages should be used to educate children in schools and states in Section 1, Paragraph10 that:

> Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. Thus every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

As argued by Ogunsuji (2003), the language policy is a binding language guide meant to be enforced by the society that formulated it through a political process and made operational. Thus it should be implemented with all the facilities necessary to achieve quality education, which is not the case in Nigeria according to Geo-JaJa and Azaiki (2010). Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo are major languages because they are spoken at least in five to ten states each and have a large numbers of speakers (Akande and Salami, 2010). In a report by Rafiu (2012) the authors acknowledge the death of many languages in Nigeria such as: Ake (Nasarawa state), Bakpakia (Cross River), Butanci, Shau and Kudu-Camo (Bauchi), Chamba (Taraba state), Sheni (Kaduna state), Holma and Honta (Adamawa state), and Sorko languages (Niger, Kwhar and Kebbi states). The local non-dominant languages should have orthographies to ensure the readership levels and use in post-primary and primary education and the local dominant languages such as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa should be used in secondary schools and when it is the MT which will add great relevance to the power and prestige of the indigenous languages (Rafiu, 2012). Furthermore he recommends that "Politicians and union leaders should read their manifestoes in the languages of their people either in addition, or as an alternative, to doing so in European languages." This will change the negative and ambivalent attitudes of Nigerians toward the use of the languages and guarantee their viability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR QUALITY LEARNING

Students who have learned to read in their MT learn to read in a second language more quickly than do those who are first taught to read in the second language

(Kosonen, 2010, Benson, 2010). Secondly, in terms of academic learning skills, students taught to read in their MT acquire such skills more quickly (Brock-Utne, 2006; Benson, 2010). Studies such as Prah (2003), Qorro (2009) have shown that children taught in any of the language varieties similar to their MT are better off in their learning comprehension than those taught in an adopted foreign language such as English.

In Nigeria, many children are quiet, learn little or nothing in class and fail in the end because they could not interact through the imposed language of interaction, English. Egbe, Bassey and Otu (2004) argue that this has an enormous impact on other aspects of life achievement in the field of education is lower than it should be, productivity is low, and social interactions are inhibited. Unoh (1982) as quoted by Omojuwa (2005) states that the majority of children in Nigeria are ill prepared for the demands of academic studies by the time they enter tertiary institutions, as they depend on short-cuts to knowledge.

The idea of forcing students to think in a foreign language as advocated by Dikshit (1974) is unproductive. Furthermore Olarenwaju (2008) states that the process describes by Dikshit above "does not help students to be creative but reduces them to "robots" who merely memorize the notes given to them by their teachers and reproduce them when required without demonstrating appreciable degree of understanding of the scientific and technological information and process under consideration". He furthermore noted that if "students merely memorize facts, principles and generalizations only to be regurgitated during examination, they will not be in a position to use the knowledge acquired since it has not been internalized". He concludes that the lack of internalization of scientific knowledge, process and skills by Nigerian students seems to have been largely responsible for Nigeria's inability to make a major breakthrough in scientific and technological development. Fafunwa (1990) points out that imposed LoI is an important factor mitigating against the dissemination of knowledge and skills, and therefore directly impacts the rapid social and economic well-being of the majority of people in Africa. There tends to be a correlation between slower assimilation and the use of a foreign language as the official language of a given country in Africa. No society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language.

Freire's theory (1970) on formal versus informal learning and the role of schooling in education is significant in this context. He views learning as a critical process consisting of reflection, unlearning conventional truths, and relearning, a process in which the valuation of local knowledge is important. Since culture, sense making and language are intimately related; a strong argument then exists for using a local language in learning. Studies such as those of Odora (2002), Prah (2003) and Geo-JaJa (2009) have found that the curriculum in many African countries are mismatched or do not reflect local thinking in teaching and learning. These studies and others demonstrate the richness of LoI in knowledge and the important need to understand why local knowledge and local language has to do with Western-based conceptualizations of 'development', seen as modernization, or even as emulation.

Many educational practitioners continue to ignore culture as a central ingredient in education. For instance, Geo-JaJa (2009, p. 93) affirms that "the alien factory model of schooling (Western educational system) that is rooted in mechanistic and linear worldview that is found in most developing countries today that oppose traditional values are inconsistence to right in education". As with the notion behind 'Education for All', many educational practitioners continue to ignore intrinsic factors, particularly culture as a central core of education. Moreover, this is more significant as the needs of rural excluded communities are rarely captured in school reforms or policy, including those directed at the poor, or those located in more isolated areas. The use of a LoI that students are familiar with significantly redistributes access to quality education between the elites and the masses and also strengthens African languages to the detriment of hegemonic forces promoting the use of colonial languages (Brock-Utne, 2006; Qorro, 2009; Babaci-Wilhite, 2013a).

Our research in both Tanzania and Nigeria show that parents are worried about the quality of English that their children are exposed to in school. In interviews by one of the authors in Tanzania, Gertrude Mugizi, a Coordinator at the Policy Forum NGO stated that "Parental aspiration for their children is to get a job, and they think being proficient in English is a necessary ticket to this end' (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). But she further observed that most pupils and even educators do not read and write English well - they are good at memorization - as the teacher-centered teaching pedagogy does not enable students to apply concepts rigorously. In another interview, Professor Khamisi, who is the former Deputy Vice Chancellor at the Open University in Dar es Salaam, expressed concerns about the consequences of learning in English for other subjects. He noted

> We are lucky to have Kiswahili as a national language, but if somebody wants to involve more languages it is not an either or. You can teach English, that is fine, but teach it well…. It is also a human rights problem; books in Kiswahili will broaden the base for education.

Khamisi adds "those 17 years are the essential years to learn, why loosing time learning through another language in order to learn the language…Freeing the mind is needed" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010).

In a situation where the parents are illiterate (and rates of adult illiteracy in the vast majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are high), if the LoI in school is a language that is not spoken at home then the problems of learning are compounded and the chances of dropout increase correspondingly. Learning outcomes and learning a language have different contrasting objectives. We argue that differences are based on a misunderstanding among students and parents who believe that using English, as a LoI is the best way to improve English skills. Learning in English may result in improved English skills, however as the evidence clearly shows, using a non-local language for knowledge acquisition is detrimental to the learning process (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). The difference is "The objectives of education are different from those for learning English language and as such the two sets of objectives

should be set apart and ways to attain each set of objectives should be found" (Roy-Campbell & Qorro, 1997, p. 98).

Another important issue in attaining quality education is teacher competence in using English as the primary LoI. Zanzibar is phasing in English as the LoI in Mathematics and Sciences even if teachers are not qualified English language speakers themselves. The negative consequences of such a policy is missed or not understood by parents and government (Babaci-Wilhite, 2012a). In the context of parental decisions between public versus private schools and that between Kiswahili and English, research shows that decisions are made on the basis of imperfect information about the learning implications of these choices in the short and long terms (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). With the cost implications of such decisions, government should provide better information on the role of language in learning and on the advantages of Kiswahili as a LoI. When confronted with this in interviews, government officials responded that it should be the parents' responsibility to seek out this information, and that the government should respect parental choices since Tanzania is a democracy. However, the problem is that the parental decisions on language and learning are based on the myth that having English as the LoI will improve student's learning abilities and their opportunities in life (Qorro, 2009). The myth has to be deflated with accurate, factual information by government so that parents can make informed choices.

In Zanzibar, the lack of qualified teachers in English was seen as an important reason for poor levels of student performance in Science and Mathematics in primary schools. Increasing the number of qualified teachers in all primary schools with a diploma in Mathematics, Science and English was regarded as a key goal in the implementation of the 2006 policy. In addition to the language issue, there were many unresolved problems associated with teacher training, the preparation of syllabus and the writing of textbooks.

In Nigeria, teachers are poorly motivated, ill trained, overworked, unevenly distributed, and abysmally insufficient in numbers (Emananjo, 2008). The truth is that English remains one of the worst taught subjects in the school system. Further, most teachers of English, including those with `paper' qualifications are unqualified to teach the English language, while most often `redundant' teachers are drafted to teach it. In Nigeria as in Tanzania it is presumed that anybody with a degree or diploma is a potential English teacher.

The number of teachers required in 1988 for the three major Nigerian languages was 55,237, but only 6,383 or 11.6% of these were available. There is a great need to meet the demand for language teachers if cultural identity is a desired goal. The small and developing languages have no trained teachers and for this reason: the former National Language Center, now transformed into the current Language Development Center (LDC) and placed under the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 1976 suggested that, in addition to the three major languages: Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, only the following nine of the remaining 387 or so indigenous languages in the country should be allowed to feature in the

country's formal school system: Edo, Fulfulde, Ibibio, Idoma, Igala, Ijo, Kanuri, Nupe, and Tiv (ADEA, 2001).

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY FOR BETTER LEARNING

Identity is strongly connected to parent's attitudes, to the language spoken at home and to cultural understanding. In Tanzania, the policy of switching from Kiswahili to English midway through the schooling process gives the impression that Kiswahili is inferior to English and that the local language is somehow inadequate in engaging with complex concepts. Using this same line of argument, Brock-Utne (2007, p. 526) points out that "the use of an unfamiliar language as the LoI appears a strategy to keep the masses down, to stupify them and make it difficult for them to rise out of poverty". This reinforces the sense of inferiority of local culture and at the same time is disadvantageous for those who have had little exposure to English at home (see Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). Education has been seen as a means to achieving equality in order to recognize each and through the promotion of all through education for all. This choice has contributed to the formation of a national identity and cultural identity. There is evidence that having one common language helps in bridging the gap among people of different ethnic groups (Prah, 2003). Nyerere in Tanzania was reflexive about cultural identity issues in choices with local LoI, which as argued above improves quality of learning and reinforces local identity (Nyerere, 1967). In the same context, Makalela (2005, p. 163) argues that "beyond pedagogic and psychological reasons … language is inextricably linked to identity, ideology and power".

In this vein, the literature has shown that when people feel that they are outsiders or when there exists linguistic alienation of the majority from the education system, social problems and conflicts intensify, thus breaking the intrinsic value contribution of education to cultural identity, nation-building and sovereignty, all of which are essential to development on their own terms (Babaci-Wilhite et al., 2012).

The Tanzanian Professor Khamisi said in an interview "Go to Japan, what are their practices? They use English for information but then they go through the information in their language. That is how they develop" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). He goes on to say that "If we use our language, we will stand to win in the long run. We will see if people are interested in knowledge or in English because it is a terrible mistake to assume that English is knowledge" (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). This point of view was also expressed by policy makers, professors and language experts interviewed by one of the authors in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar in 2011 and 2012. However, Babaci-Wilhite (2012b) did not find in her study in Zanzibar that the emphasis on learning first and giving English a secondary role was emphasized in schools. Many academicians have tried to convince the MoEVT to accept this point. What then is the reason for resistance to the use of a LoI and a culture with which most children are familiar? An important factor is market protection and security interests coming as

a result of structural adjustment policies and foreign aid conditionalities imposed on Africa, as well as education-led globalization. A senior policy maker at the National Kiswahili Council (2008) said "If African culture and language is not equated with "development", it will be impossible to encourage development on African terms. The Japanese and the Chinese started from scratch but not us." She concludes, "It is not a personal decision, it is a political decision, we are here to convince to change the education policy but with globalization people are fearful. It is confusing".

The use of a local language in the educational system adds self-respect and contributes to decolonizing local culture. By reinforcing the importance of local languages, one reinforces the interest in local knowledge and skills. Ideally, one would choose a non-dominant local LoI, but in cases in which this is expensive and practically difficult to implement, in the case of Tanzania a local language such as Kiswahili, with local roots and widely used in public spaces is a good second choice (Babaci-Wilhite, 2010). In Nigeria, the importance of Nigerian languages to the protection, preservation and promotion of cultures and to the enhancement of human dignity, and the necessity of learning a major language for purposes of promoting national unity and integration is enshrined in the 1989 Constitution of the Republic of Nigeria. But this has been difficult to enforce due to the multiplicity of diverse local languages. For cultural identity and educational justification the government has settled on the use of immediate environment local language in the first three years of schooling. The NPE (2004) stated that

> Government shall ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother or the language of the immediate community; and to this end will: (i) provide the orthography of many Nigerian languages, and (ii) produce textbooks in Nigerian languages (Section 2:41e). At the primary level (e) the medium of instruction shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject. (f) From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as subjects (Section 4:19).

Furthermore, decree 16 of 1985 on Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishments of Institutions) gave legal backing and power of enforcement to the teaching of languages. All Nigerian languages can be used as MT or LIC (Language of Immediate Community). However the pedagogical feasibility to organize initial literacy in 400 local languages can serve the need of the educational process and become the media for preserving the people's cultures. In theory they all qualify to be taught as school subjects under the NPE policy on language education in Primary and Junior Secondary Schools (ADEA, 2001). Clearly because most of them have such small numbers of speakers, it would not appear to be practical to teach them as school subjects. However, the NPE also mentions that the language of the local environment shall be taught as L1 where it has orthography and literature. Where these do not exist, it shall be taught with emphasis on orally L2. At the secondary

school level, one major Nigerian language is a requirement for enrolment at the junior and senior certificate examinations. The national language policy contained in section 51, 55, 91 and 95 of the 1979 constitution, states as follows: "The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made" while Article 97 of the constitution says for the State House of Assembly that the business shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct its business in one or more other languages spoken in the state. Soyoye (2010) asserts that these constitutional provisions while not declaring English explicitly as the official language of Nigeria, give it the status of the priority language of governance at both the federal and state level.

In most African countries English language is introduced at an early age in order to ensure that the standard of written and spoken English of students is relatively high. However Okonkwo (1983) cites reports which have shown passing rates and levels of students in examinations, particularly in English language, science, technology and mathematics at the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary `O' Level conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC): "An analysis of available results from 1964 to 1972 reveals that the percentage of candidates who gained distinction or credit in English fluctuated between 19% and 24% while more than 30% of the candidates failed in the English language examination each year" according to Aboderin (1986, quoted by Olarenwaju, 2008). A similar conclusion was reached by the Nigeria Examination Sub-committee (ibid, p. 20), which stated that poor performance reached its lowest ebb in 1985. The distinction and credit pass fell to about 16% in 1979, while more than 50% failed. Available reports for 1983 to 1985 also show that performance ranged from 5.14% to 14.49% at distinction/credit level while failure ranged from 59.08% to 82.49% (Okanlawon, 1987). Improved quality also reduces repetition and dropout (Kosonen, 2010). Language influences the thought process of the learner and his understanding of his environment (Olarenwaju, 2008). Consequently in the learning of science, deliberate efforts should be made to enable students to learn science in their MT.

In Nigeria, Afolayan argues that there are three primary functions for language in Nigerian education, making Nigerians capable of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that will make Nigeria a highly developed nation by acknowledging "the importance of language in the educational process", making Nigerians capable of preserving and positively utilizing their cultures as "a means of preserving people's culture" and making Nigeria become a united nation "in the interest of national unity" (1990, p. 5-6).

HUMAN RIGHTS IN EDUCATION

In this section we argue that "Education for All", or right to education should include giving weight to local language and local culture, as well as a focus on local needs. Education should be given to every child and the Article 26, of the United Nations

Declaration of Human Rights of (1948) affirming the right to education as a human right, states that:

> Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free…Education shall be directed to …the development of human personality and to the strengthening of human rights and fundamental freedom (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948).

In line with the concept of rights in education, schooling in Africa should not mean that the child should learn how and what USA and Britain are teaching in their country. The content of the curriculum and the language, which teach in, should be localized in order to bring quality education, which we value as a human right in education. Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) says little about the nature, kind and quality of education. This brings to the discussion of educational rights the notion of rights in education, which implies that rights are not ensured unless the education offered is of high quality. Rights in education concept works to shift the paradigm away from how learning takes place in school towards moral duty imposed through the international consensus of human rights. Rights in education includes the principle that every human being is entitled to a decent education and gives priority to the intrinsic importance of education, implying that governments need to mobilize the resources to offer quality education (UNICEF, 2003, p. 8). Tomasevski (2003) advocates that education should prepare learners for participation: "it should teach the young that all human beings – themselves included – have rights" (2003, p. 33). However, Robeyns (2006) claims that the rights-based discourse runs the risk of reducing rights to legal rights only. She points to Pogge (2002, p. 52-53) who argues that human rights can be understood as moral rights or as legal rights, that in principle, can co-exist and can be complementary. However he writes that a weakness of this inclusive view is that human rights are whatever governments agree for them to be. Robeyns (2006) argues "the rights-based approach model of education is that, once the government agrees that children should have the rights to be educated, it may see its task as being precisely executing this agreement, and nothing more". Furthermore she claims that "well-developed rights-based educational policies will state precisely which rights are guaranteed to whom, and what the government has to do to ensure that rights are not only rhetorical, but also effective" (ibid, p. 77). Education has the potential to empower if teaching and learning give nourishment and self-respect that in turn bring confidence to teachers and learners. We agree with Robeyns (ibid, p. 77) when she writes that "It will be necessary that the government goes beyond its duties in terms of the rights-based policies, to undertake action to ensure that every child can fully and equally enjoy her rights to education". This implies that teachers are well-trained and well-paid, teaching material is provided and a good curriculum is developed.

Language plays a critical role in cognitive learning and in the development of logic, reason, critical thinking and new knowledge (Geo-JaJa, 2009; Babaci-Wilhite, 2013c). Therefore local languages should be seen as an intimate part of culture and

thus should be designated as a human right in the education sector (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Applying the arguments on quality learning, education in a local language should be regarded as a human right. Reforms and policies connecting local cultures to education have been neglected not only in Tanzania and Nigeria, but in most of African countries. According to Samoff (2007, p. 60) "effective education reform requires agendas and initiatives with strong local roots". In other words, indigenous knowledge should be included in the curriculum (Odora, 2002), and indigenous language is critical to the preservation and development of indigenous knowledge. Africa will not achieve human rights in education until and unless it acknowledges that local language, identity and culture are to be respected and fulfilled in local curriculum. Similar to the situation in Tanzania and Nigeria, in other African countries the English language serves as a powerful and prestigious tool in society. It is time to reverse the power and prestige between the English language and the indigenous languages in schools. The ability to speak these languages should give socio-economic benefits and strengthen cultural identity.

In sum, the complex implications of education for Africa and the need for a new strategy as highlighted in this chapter is well documented in previous publications (Geo-JaJa & Mangum, 2003; Geo-JaJa, 2004). Education must be centripetally oriented, and based on the principles of respect for human rights and cultural dignity. It must give consideration to local realities and direct its intellectual efforts and curriculum towards the achievement of freedoms that are consistent with education as a human right (Babaci-Wilhite & Geo-JaJa, 2011). According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), the most important Linguistic Human Right (LHR) in education for indigenous peoples and minorities (if they want to reproduce themselves as peoples/minorities), is an unconditional right to mother tongue medium education in non-fee state schools. Moreover she argues that binding educational LHRs are more or less non-existent in African countries. Brann report (1977, quoted in ADEA, 2001) states a pessimistic but realistic estimate that 90-95% of today's spoken languages may be very seriously endangered or extinct by the year 2100. This means another round of colonization of the mind through cultural assimilation of non-local language and culture. Since much of the knowledge about how to maintain the world's biodiversity is encoded in the small indigenous and local languages, with the disappearance of the languages this knowledge, is more accurate and sophisticated than "western" "scientific" knowledge, crucial ecosystem knowledge will also disappear if we do not acknowledge local LoI as a right in education.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Learning to read and write in a local language is directly correlated with the improvement of a student's abilities to think critically about their own conditions and about the world. Using local languages as LoI provides a sustainable benefit in national cohesiveness for nation-building and cultural identity. Children of all backgrounds will be able to perform better in school with local languages. This

study addressing how do language in education policies in Tanzania and Nigeria are implemented in order to maintain cultural identity and social equality which we value as a right in education should keep local knowledge including local languages in school while opening to global developments. This path forward will contribute to our understanding of quality education and children's confidence in their community, but also to their ability to understand and engage with the world on their own terms.

What is suggested therefore is that a sustainable investment should be made in local languages as LoI in primary and post-primary schools and monitored in order to assess its effectiveness in terms of student achievement. The use of a non-local language is a heritage of the colonial era. Colonial languages are still used to teach children in secondary schools onwards. Therefore we recommend that urgency should be attached to a sustainable investment in mother tongue education in primary school as well as introducing a local LoI as a major language in secondary school. These for us are the only means to avoid the genocide of local languages and local knowledge. To monitor the performance of students in order to assess whether they perform better in school for the benefits of quality learning would be our final recommendation. We argue that this implementation of a local LoI and curriculum will bring quality "Learning for All" and that this is a right in education not only in Tanzania and Nigeria but in all African countries. According to our study, the advantages of teaching children in their local languages go beyond academic success to include cultural, emotional, cognitive and socio-psychological benefits – this we state is the combined role of rights to education and rights in education.

NOTE

[1] Kiswahili is the name of the language and the word "Swahili" is an adjective. Thus we have "Swahili" culture and Swahili speakers, but the language is Kiswahili. But in most books written during colonialism, the word "Swahili" is used to refer to the language (Puja, 2003).

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SAM MCHOMBO

LANGUAGE, LEARNING, AND EDUCATION FOR ALL IN AFRICA[1]

INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the second (revised) edition of Plato's *The Republic* contains the following comment from Desmond Lee, the translator:

> Of Plato's early years we know very little. He presumably received the normal education of a Greek boy, learning to read and write and study the poets (Plato, 1974, p. xii).

The conception of "education" that is embodied in this comment has dominated the general view concerning the proper construal of "education." In brief, it is a program of knowledge acquisition that centrally involves literacy and acquaintance with the subject matter of various disciplines, codified in written form. In the case of the Greek tradition of the period of Plato's early life this could be the "poetics." The term however, just like that of philosophy, had a wider meaning than might be suggested by its modern day usage. The role that literacy has played as the crucial aspect of education has, unwittingly, contributed to negative evaluation of African indigenous knowledge systems, to say nothing of the use of African languages as mediums of instruction. Not that literacy qua literacy is to blame. The problem arose from the implementation of literacy as central to formal education in Africa, against the background of colonialism.

LANGUAGE, MEDIUM, AND KNOWLEDGE REPRESENTATION

The advent of the written representation of language profoundly affected humans' ability to preserve knowledge. It is easy to gain access to the system of beliefs that constituted Greek mythology because of the written records that have survived. Indeed, some of the major modern day religions such as Christianity and Islam, like much of knowledge in science and the humanities, owe their accessibility and diffusion to their preservation in the written form. The current state of knowledge in the domains of history, culture, legends, religious beliefs, scientific developments, technological advancement, etc. is dutifully facilitated by the availability of the information in the form of written material.

Unfortunately, this has sometimes led to an unwarranted conflation of knowledge acquisition with literacy and, to the extent that knowledge and its acquisition

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are identified with education in general, to the almost inevitable conclusion that education is to be identified with literacy and the acquisition of the knowledge so represented.

The conclusion is unfortunate, especially for education in Africa. The written representation of language is but one medium. There is a crucial distinction between language and medium (cf. Abercrombie, 1967). Language resides in the patterns that the sounds or the markings on paper or variants thereof represent. Those sounds or markings constitute the mediums for linguistic representation. They are different, and they appeal to different cognitive skills for production, perception and processing. Every human system of communication, a language that is, has manifested itself in the phonetic form. Only some have had writing systems or orthographic conventions developed for them. In Africa, while some languages had been represented in written form too (cf. Prah, 2008), most of sub-Saharan Africa remained preliterate. Representation in the written form is laborious and demands expenditure of time and energy. Still, knowledge is independent of the medium of knowledge acquisition and, while it may be facilitated by the permanence that the written form represents, it is not crucially dependent on or determined by, that medium (cf. Bruce 2013). Just as linguists distinguish between language and medium, there is a distinction between form and content with the usual observation that the connection between the two is indirect, mediated by various rules or principles, collectively referred to as "grammar." The study of grammatical structure has been central to linguistic investigation and linguistic theory in recent linguistic scholarship (cf. Bresnan, 2001; Chomsky, 1965, 1981; Mchombo, 2004).

The unfortunate aspect of this conception of education, where it is identified with literacy, is that it has relegated the oral transmission of knowledge, and the education that is imparted in that format, to the status of inferior or non-existent. The knowledge systems that are transmitted through oral presentation, lacking specific authorship and intellectual property rights or copyright protections, does not receive the recognition that is preserved for the knowledge embodied in written literature. The tradition of literacy has even impacted the characterization of the terms 'language' and 'literature.' For instance, Nurse & Hinnebusch (1993) report the following view about the distinction between 'language' and 'dialect':

> One would define language as national and dialect as local. A second defines language as the standard, written form; dialect as the nonstandard, substandard, or unwritten form (Nurse & Hinnebusch, 1993, p. 37).

The characterization of language as "the standard, written form" exacerbates the situation through the conventional implicature that unwritten (or recently written) languages are less than languages, charitably referred to as "dialects." Unfortunately this term is imbued with connotations of lack of political and/or economic empowerment, or intellectual acuity. The less charitable reading takes the term dialect as connoting 'primitive,' characterizing signals for communication that consist in 'squeaks and jibbers,' totally lacking in grammar (cf. July, 1992).

The term 'literature' fares no better. In fact, the written tradition has influenced its very definition. The fifth edition of the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language characterizes 'literature' as follows:

1. The body of written works of a language, period, or culture.
2. Imaginative or creative writing, especially of a recognized artistic value.
3. The art or occupation of a literary writer.
4. The body of written work produced by scholars or researchers in a given field.

Thus, 'literature' has to do with written material. Conversely, the body of knowledge that constitutes legitimate matter for education must be that accessible in written form. Alternative systems of education or embodiment of knowledge either do not exist or their existence requires lobbying.

This characterization of language and literature is, unfortunately, too narrow. Knowledge systems are, technically, independent of the medium exploited for their preservation or transmission. For instance, languages embody systems of knowledge that have cultural significance and practical utility. Their transmission in oral form has characterized the forms of education for all practiced by various societies where mastery of the norms, values, practical skills etc., is central to the upbringing of the youth. Fafunwa (1974) made the point forcefully in the observation that,

> Every society, simple or complex, has its own system of training and educating its youth. Education for good life has been one of the most persistent concerns of men throughout history. What may differ from place to place, nation to nation, or people to people are goals and the method of approach (Fafunwa, 1974, p. 17).

The observation here is that many societies and, until the advent of the writing systems, virtually all societies engaged in education through the medium of oral transmission of knowledge. The independence of knowledge systems from the medium is accompanied by the observation that human systems of communication, languages in brief, are comparably complex in their grammatical structure. The intrinsic presence of grammar in human language means that education need not be identified with any particular medium, any more than it is better suited to specific languages. This does not, in any way, reduce the importance of the written medium with respect to its utility in long-term preservation of knowledge, a property that correlates with reduction in dependency on human memory and the vicissitudes of that, not the least of which is the (untimely) death of the knowledge bearers.

EDUCATION IN COLONIAL AFRICA

The recent history of colonialism in Africa shows that colonialists assumed power, control of resources and government and, along with that came the major religions of Islam and Christianity. While the agenda of the colonial administrators differed in some respects from that of the missionaries, whose major concern was evangelization

and proselytization; there was a common denominator to them. This was, *inter alia*, the task of "civilizing" the African native. To achieve this, part of the strategy was to "educate" the native. Just as the systems of government that were instituted very quickly became "pale" replicas of the systems in the colonialists' home countries, the system of education followed suit. After all it served to prepare the colonialists' children for transition into the society "back home" in Europe. Thus, the system of education was formal, with emphasis on literacy. The colonialists had an investment in the education of Africans so that they could nurture a class of African citizens who would be literate and could carry out the colonial government agenda, using the colonial language. Those "educated" Africans would also "provide a measure of leadership within the colonial state" (Trudell, 2012, p. 369).

The immediate result of the introduction of formal education was its impact on the choice of both the language of instruction and the content of the curriculum. Invariably, the languages of the colonialists became the languages of governance and of education. Through that they acquired the aura of being languages that embodied knowledge and through which knowledge could be imparted. They became the languages of power. Both the colonizing mission and the evangelization had the effect of "negating" African systems of government, culture, religious beliefs and practices, history, languages, knowledge systems, etc. African civilization did not exist, more so since there were no written records of it. The civilizing mission underlying missionary activity is dutifully observed in the following comment:

> The European and the North American mission churches in the nineteenth century had a focus that was essentially evangelical and concerned with conversion experiences and increasing the size of the 'flock'. 'Civilizing the natives' to conform to Western ideas of social life and morality was also of significance. Otherwise interpreted Christian education at this time was in part an ideological aspect of imperialism through which indigenous peoples were introduced to western languages, culture and scientific knowledge, and a participation in the capitalist free market of trade and industry (Kallaway, 2006, p. 5).

The introduction of formal education placed emphasis on history, religion, and cultures of the western nations, in the belief that advancement and civilization resided in acquisition of their languages and knowledge systems. The elitism of the western values had been woven into the fabric of the culture of western education. It has been observed that for centuries "…the tradition of literacy in the Western world was confined largely to the children of the elite. Not until the nineteenth century, in response to the Industrial Revolution, did nations begin to institute mandatory schooling and strive for mass literacy" (Cole & Cole 1993:474). The elitist culture of education accompanied its introduction in Africa. The crusade against African societies that began with missionary activities at the dawn of colonization had the profound effect of forcing Africans to forsake their traditional beliefs, identity,

and self-esteem. Chinua Achebe makes the pithy comment about the impact of colonialism in the following manner:

> Without subscribing to the view that Africa gained nothing at all in her long encounter with Europe, one could still say, in all fairness, that she suffered many terrible and lasting misfortunes. In terms of human dignity and human relations the encounter was almost a complete disaster for the black races (cited in Roscoe, 1971, p. 121).

Newly independent African states tried to tackle this "disaster" in part through the promotion of cultural values and practices. This was a period when "many African leaders were attempting to re-assert and identify what they had lost as a consequence of a colonial cultural and social assault" (Moto, 2009, p. 146). The re-assertion of the cultural heritage lost through "colonial and social assault" also took the form of addressing the issue of national/official language(s) for government, for national unity or national identity, as well as educational reforms that determined what education was for or about, and raised questions about language in education.

RIGHTS 'IN' EDUCATION

Post-colonial African states inherited the educational systems bequeathed to them by the colonialists. These came with the content of the curricula and the languages of instruction. In the former English colonies English remains the language of instruction and most of the curricula, at independence, emphasized English values and culture, whether it be religion, history, government, literature, or whatever (likewise for French and Portuguese for those countries previously colonized by Belgium or France and Portugal). The premise of the inferiority of African languages, cultural values, including religious beliefs, had practically morphed into the axiomatic. It was an axiom that constituted the unquestioned premise for the imposition of colonial and, later, post-colonial policies whose very existence "… tended to be justified by 'scientific proof' of the presumed spiritual and cultural inferiority of African peoples and of their inability to govern themselves" (Mezzana, 2002, p. 3). Thus, the people of the "dark continent" had been primarily characterized very negatively in European scholarship. One view about Africans had been advanced by "…anthropologists such as Lucien Levi-Bruhl, and by his own Catholic church, that Africans were incapable of rational thought, and hence were less than human" (Janz, 2004, p. 10).

> Such views had gained currency in what was and, to a large extent, still remains, a racialized world with racialized discourse. With regard to religion the view as stated by some theorists, was that Africa was a continent "… where people had no idea of God and where the Devil in all his abysmal, grotesque and forbidden features, armed to the teeth and with horns complete, held sway (Awolalu, 1976, p. 2).

Some of these were theorists who had fantastic tales to tell about Africa. One such tale said, among other things that "[B]efore the introduction of genuine faith and higher standards of culture by the Arabs, the natives had neither political organization nor strictly speaking any religion…therefore, in examining pre-Muhammadan conditions of the negro races, [we have] to confine ourselves to the description of their crude fetishism, their brutal and often cannibal customs, their vulgar and repulsive idols and their squalid homes" (ibid.)

Such an evaluation of the Africans had nontrivial repercussions on the form and content of education in Africa. Education took on a decidedly western emphasis, consistent with the colonizing and civilizing agenda despite the curious contradiction inherent in imparting such knowledge in a foreign language to Africans who were "incapable of rational thought, and hence were less than human." The myth of sub-human characteristics of Africans, physically and, especially, mentally, would be used to justify the maltreatment of the people, not the least of which was subjection to slavery. And, as is common with myths, "once the public has decided to accept something as an interesting fact, it becomes almost impossible to get the acceptance rescinded" (Pullum, 1991, p. 159). Somehow, the myth did not deter the colonialists' mission to educate and civilize the Africans.

Thus, during colonial education, complete with its western bias, the question of the language of instruction was, to all intents and purposes, moot. Education involved literacy and the available literature was in the colonizers' languages. They were also the languages of power and civilization. The Africans had to adjust to that reality.

With independence African leaders had not only reviewed and rejected the logic or rationale of colonialism but they also made efforts to re-assert the centrality of their languages and cultures to their societies. The linguistic plurality and diverse ethnicity of African countries is a topic that has received much commentary (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1998). It led to different strategies for the adoption of languages as national or official. The most celebrated is the story of Kiswahili. It spread as trade and commerce made inroads into the East African interior from the coastal areas. It had gained the status of a *lingua franca* thus, with political backing, was poised for promotion to the status of national language. It is also one of the official languages of Kenya and, as a relatively new development, of the African Union.

The situation was decidedly different in the neighboring country of Malawi. There, Chichewa, a dialectal variant of Chinyanja was elevated to national language because it was the language of President Kamuzu Banda's ethnic group, the Chewa (cf. Matiki, 1997; Mchombo, 1998a, 2006). English retained the status of official language. Post-apartheid South Africa, in contrast to those two cases, addressed the language issue by declaring eleven official languages, nine African languages from its nine provinces, plus English and Afrikaans (cf. Roy-Campbell, 2006). The national language policies of most of the other countries fall somewhere in between, with the colonial languages largely retained as official languages.

With regard to language in education policy, there has not been much shift from the use of the colonial languages, French, Portuguese and, especially, English, as

the language of instruction. This was retained despite putative difficulty with the language. Recognition of problems with comprehension of English texts became evident when, in the early 1960s, Longman Publishing Company issued simplified versions of English literary works for non-native readers. The preface to the initial releases in the Longman Simplified English Series, explaining the rationale for the series, opened with a rather blunt statement. It said something along the following lines:

English books are written for the English, those who have spoken English since they began to speak, and have read English since they began to read. They are not written for the bilingual foreigner.[2]

The preface remarked, further, that the foreigner would not appreciate the content due to lack of proficiency in the language emanating from inability to handle the complexities of English grammar accompanied by severe limitations in knowledge of English lexis. The simplified series tried to make the material accessible to the said foreigners. With regard to the content of the curriculum there were minor adjustments that did not radically alter the existing syllabuses. Probably the most radical shift was in Tanzania where Kiswahili became the language of instruction in primary schools under the leadership of the late (Mwalimu) Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, who resolved to elevate it.

This enunciated Nyerere's view of Education for Self Reliance (ESR) (cf. Dlamini, 2007, p. 105). In Zambia, the move was to reform the educational program so that education could be instrumental to the development of the country. The program that was enunciated was that of Education for Development (EDA) (cf. Banda, 2008).

The enterprise of educational reform has been two-pronged. On the one hand, there is the question of language of instruction or, rather, whether the use of foreign, colonial languages remains defensible in the education of African children and youth. Secondly, there is the issue of content. What should the curricula consist of and to what extent, and how, should African cultures and African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, to use Banda's designation, be incorporated? These questions have dominated discussion of education in Africa in recent scholarship. The issues constitute part of the narrative about democratic practice and the institution of basic rights in education.

ON CHOICE OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

It is a truism that children learn better when they can understand the teacher and the material is presented to them in the language that they speak (cf. Brock-Utne, 2012a, b). Indeed, the right to gain knowledge through the use of one's mother tongue, especially in the early years of education, is assumed to facilitate learning as well as being a basic right in education. As early as 1953, a report by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the use of vernacular (native) languages in education discussed the issue of which language to use with a bilingual child. In the report it was taken as axiomatic that the best

medium for teaching a child is through his mother tongue. Even in the United States, a country with a history of immigration where many children begin school lacking proficiency in English in 1974, the US Supreme Court reviewed the lack of mother-tongue education and declared that "…these children are denied equality of treatment even if they are given the same facilities, textbooks, and teachers because they are 'effectively foreclosed from meaningful education'" (Cole & Cole, 1993, p. 488). Studies in developmental psychology suggest that the system of meaningful signs that the child acquires in first language development are the ones that work automatically for expression and understanding. The language also serves the function of facilitating identification among the members of the community to which the child belongs. Educationally, the child learns more quickly through the first language than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium (cf. Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin, p. 2001).

In most parts of the world education is delivered in the children's mother tongue, with notable exceptions in cases of minority-cum-immigrant groups getting "absorbed" into a dominant culture, or cases of bilingualism that may require a "transitional phase" before adjusting to monolingual education in the language of the dominant culture.[3] On the other hand, in classrooms in Africa instruction is "given in a language children do not normally use outside of school, a language they do not command and often hardly understand" (Brock-Utne 2012a, p. 147) What accounts for this?

There are various responses to this question. Clearly the most crucial response derives from the legacy of colonialism. The introduction of formal schooling, currently dominating the notion of education, came with literacy requirements and, with that, the languages of the colonialists. This point has been made repeatedly in studies of education in Africa. For instance, Alamin Mazrui states the matter as follows:

> The process of colonial education had the effect of marginalizing African languages in favor of Euro-languages, thus creating a linguistic configuration that served to legitimize and reproduce the unequal division of power and resources between the speakers of Euro-languages and the speakers of African languages. The overwhelming majority of post-colonial African governments thus inherited educational systems with imperial languages as the predominant media of instruction (Mazrui, 2004, p. 40).

With such Eurocentric education, both in medium of instruction and curriculum, the need for African languages or systems of knowledge did not and could not arise. Those were actively suppressed or, where needed, tactfully incorporated into western knowledge systems. There was considerable loss of indigenous knowledge that occurred through "formal education which was constructed by the Europeans in their languages and their interpretation of the written form of African languages" (Roy-Campbell, 2006, p. 3).

The assumed inferiority of African languages galvanized a racialized conception about their suitability to education. It is a view that derives illogically from the circumstances of the advent of formal schooling and the Eurocentric education. The racialized view is that African languages lack the grammatical complexity or the lexicon to express systems of knowledge that are central to education, especially so with respect to science, mathematics and philosophy. The view is illogical since, as noted by semanticists, every language can express anything that the human mind conceives. This is the principle of expressibility suggested by Searle (1969), the principle of universality of Tarski (1956), and one that Katz (1972) has called the principle of effability (cf. Katz, 1972). The essence of the principle is that "… each human thought is expressible in some sentence of any natural language. And, indeed, one does almost inevitably find a sentence in his language to express what he wants to say, even though the process may not be always easy and the final choice may not always be the best way to say it" (Katz, 1972, p. 19). Detractors might resort to invoking the theory of linguistic relativity, popularly known as the Sapir/Whorf hypothesis. The hypothesis claims that language determines the nature of conceptual reality (cf. Cooper 1973). Thus, linguistic differences could underlie radically different conceptual outlooks, making some languages inherently incapable of providing expressions for certain concepts and systems of knowledge that are expressible in some other language. The response to this hypothesis is partially based on inter-translatability between languages. As noted by Katz (1972), "…it suffices to point out that it follows from the effability thesis that each natural language is capable of expressing the same body of thoughts and that this implies (but is not implied by) the claim that all natural languages are inter-translatable in the sense that, for any sentence of one natural language, there is at least one sentence in every other natural language that expresses the same proposition" (ibid, p. 20).

Further, the linguistic basis for conceptual categorization that is central to the linguistic relativity hypothesis, besides facing the problems of verifiability, could lead to unwarranted claims about differential levels of intelligence among different races especially when there are also differences in languages[4]. Admittedly, languages get adapted to the knowledge systems that prove crucial to their societies. For instance, there has been a perennial myth about the incredible range of words among the Eskimos to describe (various states of) snow (cf. Pullum 1991 for critical commentary). The specialization of language to knowledge that is crucial to the society may exemplify what Katz has termed the principle of local effability but that does not limit their expressive power in novel domains. In other words, the lack of structural complexity attributed to African languages to justify their elimination from utilization as mediums of instruction or as suitable embodiments of knowledge systems is devoid of empirical justification and constitutes an assertion of sheer prejudice.

The fact that academic progress, construed as passing examinations and continuing to higher grades of schooling, is symptomatic of intellectual development has led to, yet, another racialized correlation between language and intelligence. Granting that

comprehension of sophisticated or highly technical material requires intelligence and that those who progress academically are appropriately intellectually endowed, in the African context this has led to the belief that intelligence could be correlated with the ability to speak English or other European languages. Admittedly, those who make academic progress do so in a formal education that is conducted in those languages. As such, their proficiency in the Europeans languages is construed as a mark of intelligence. Failure to master those languages shows lack of intelligence. Hence, African languages are excluded, virtually by fiat, from being indexical of intelligence since they are not used in education.

The reality is that the issue is a racialized approach to language and intelligence in that it is not confined to the distinction between European and African languages. In the United States there is a variety of English normally associated with African Americans. Sometimes referred to as African American (Vernacular) English (cf. Alim & Smitherman, 2012) it is stigmatized as not "proper English." It is taken as indexical of lack of education and as a mark of ignorance.[5] It is English, of course, but it has the distinction of being identified with a particular racial group. It is duly labeled as non-standard and not suitable for education. Those of its speakers who do not "code-switch" and speak the "proper English" minimize their prospects for employment. The "standard" language is the gatekeeper, the variant of those in power, hence the language of power. In an era when "…outright racial discrimination is legally banned (though still widely practiced), language has become an even more important vehicle in the denial of access to resources to Blacks…" (Alim & Smitherman, 2012, p. 54). Education, as the means to economic, social, or political empowerment, requires the abandonment of the "non-standard" variety, with encouragement or "training" to master and operate in the "standard" or "proper" English, basically the variety of those in power[6].

Then there is the argument based on the linguistic pluralism of African countries. The claim is that African nation-states are so ethnically heterogeneous and linguistically diverse that choosing any one of the languages as medium of instruction would promote ethnic sentiment and lead to disunity. The issue of multiplicity of languages in Africa militating against the use of any one of them serving either as a national language or language of education has been made ad nauseam. Since time of independence the language issue has been there. The claim is that there are "too many languages in these countries to select one as the 'national language' or as the language of education. Selection of one over others would create tensions and ethnic strife" (Roy-Campbell, op. cit. 3). Thus, the situation favors the use of some European language as both official and as language of education because of its ethnic neutrality.

The argument seems to have *prima facie* validity. The obvious truth is that within the political boundaries of most of the African nation-states there are many languages. The validity of the claim rests upon the determination of what constitutes a "language" within each one of the countries. To put the matter differently, the plurality of languages is based primarily on the colonialists' proliferation of

ethnicities for the sake of government. Just as the legacy of colonialism included "the creation and subsequent retention of highly arbitrarily drawn political boundaries that have placed different ethnicities within the same countries while simultaneously spreading some ethnic groups across different countries" (Mchombo 1998a: 34), it extended to the dubious classification of various groups as comprising distinct ethnicities. In general there was little by way of cultural or linguistic differences to justify the multiplicity. African cultures, even when so pluralized, have too much of "family resemblance" to be exploited as the source of ethnic distinctions. In fact, it has been noted that "…ethnic labels in the African context are at best meaningless, at worst the legacy of a colonial construction designed to control and oppress…Thus, ethnicity might be more accurately viewed as one of a number of negotiable aspects of one's identity." (Frank, 1995, p. 144).

African languages bolster that even further. While the existence of four language phyla (Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afroasiatic, and Khoisan) is an accepted fact, the classification of African languages has not been without controversy. The origins of that are multiple, including "…at least prejudice on the part of the Europeans, who have often allowed non-linguistic criteria to intrude on their classificatory tasks" (Childs 2003, p. 19). Bantu languages, the largest subgroup in the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo family, pose additional challenges to classification as language or dialect. They have unity that makes the drawing of linguistic boundaries largely arbitrary. As noted by Childs,

> In terms of classification, the unity of Bantu and indeed the Benue-Congo family was recognized early on (cf. Doke & Cole 1961). To linguists working in within other parts of Niger-Congo or in other parts of Africa in general, the uniformity to Bantu is impressive, in terms of both the lexicon (cognates) and shared grammatical structure (ibid, p. 26).

In light of this, the argument for the preference of European languages as official languages and as languages for education becomes yet another facet of colonialism, not based on the impracticality of adoption of African languages, duly harmonized and standardized for the task (cf. Prah, 2003). In fact the argument loses its force when it is noted that linguistic pluralism is not peculiar to Africa. China has been claimed to be "home to thousands of dialects and several minority languages. These include Cantonese and Hokkien, which enjoy strong regional support. Mandarin - formally called Putonghua in China, meaning "common tongue" - is one of the most widely-spoken languages in the world" (BBC website, 2013). Mandarin may be the national language, but "China's Education Ministry says that about 400 million people - or 30% of the population - cannot speak the country's national language. Of the 70% of the population who can speak Mandarin, many do not do it well enough, a ministry spokeswoman told Xinhua news agency on Thursday" (ibid).

The linguistic diversity of China has not constituted an argument for the use of a foreign language as the language of education. The difference between Africa and China in this regard may, *inter alia*, be reduced to the history of colonialism[7].

However, the languages remain important to their speakers and to their development. China has made giant strides in across the board development over the past few decades, currently ranking as the second most powerful economy in the world. The lessons from such other countries lend credence to the view that "no country can make progress on the basis of a borrowed language, understood only by a minority" (Prah, 2013). The education programs in Africa whose end result has traditionally been the production of culturally alienated elites, mediated by the use of foreign languages as mediums of instruction, shares the blame for the (perceived) under-development of the countries.

The reality about education in Africa is that the use of English has not necessarily translated into massive academic success for the students. On the contrary, it seems to have exacerbated the failure rate in schools, thereby undermining the development of the nation-states and seriously reducing the continent's competitive edge. The problems of learning academic content in languages that are not used familiarly, with instruction provided by individuals who are equally non-proficient in those languages, has contributed to making failure a chronic feature of education (cf. Reche et. al, 2012). In Malawi, the legacy of English as language of instruction continues to deliver negative results. In 2013 Chancellor College, a major constituent college of the University of Malawi "withdrew over one hundred students. This led the college registrar to state that the students can hardly express themselves in English" (Moto p.c.). The situation is aggravated by the fact that the teachers are hardly proficient in English either. As stated by Moto "the so-called teachers of English themselves have language challenges of their own" (ibid).

Studies have shown that this is largely a consequence of language in education policies rather than the intellectual capacity of the students (cf. Babaci-Wilhite, 2013; Babaci-Wilhite et. al. 2012; Brock-Utne, 2007; Hendriksen, 2010; Mtenje, 2002; Roy-Campbell, 2006; Rugemalira et. al., 1990). While various countries have responded to the "calamity" by focusing on how to improve proficiency in, and strengthen the presence of, English, dutifully supported by the British Government and/or the World Bank, noteworthy in the debate has been "the total absence of voices suggesting, even mildly, that perhaps the policy of English-medium instruction from the earliest years of an African child's education deserves another look altogether" (Mazrui, 2004, p. 42). In brief, the merits of mother-tongue education simply do not receive attention despite results of numerous research studies. These show that "children learn faster and therefore acquire other academic skills when first taught in their mother tongue. They also learn a second language much more quickly than those taught to read in an unfamiliar language" (Mtenje, 2002, p. 32)[8]. The arguments for implementation of mother-tongue education would, naturally, gain credibility with illustrative examples. The patently false claim that African languages lack the grammatical complexity or lexicon required to convey modern concepts is belied by the existence of religious texts like the Bible in numerous mother tongues. Therefore, developing curricula for teaching in these languages shouldn't be as difficult as it is often alleged or perceived.

LANGUAGE AND MATH/SCIENCE EDUCATION

A particularly persistent view is that advocates of mother tongue instruction merely engage in obfuscation of the problem. The subterfuge has been to recast the issue in the form of claims that it is not that African languages could not be used as mediums of instructions. They may indeed be good for poetry, singing and some kinds of conversation. Rather, it is simply that they are not suited to science, mathematics, and technology. Rugemalira et. al. have noted the appeal to this view with regard to the suitability of Kiswahili in education in the observation that "a major objection to Kiswahili has traditionally been the supposed inadequacy of the language with regard to technical terminology…and, further, that the language does not have the same international role as English…" (Rugemalira et. al., 1990, p. 30-31)

The inadequacy of African languages in the expression of knowledge embodied in science, mathematics, and technology is, really, more of an axiom than anything that derives from empirical studies or theoretical validity. It is simply a conclusion based on the history of education in Africa, itself imbued with all the colonialists' prejudicial views about Africans. The paper just cited proceeds to dispute the claim made about Kiswahili in this regard. In their critique of the claim, the authors virtually advance arguments that are comparable to those about the expressiveness of language and inter-translatability between languages (cf. Katz, 1972).

The sciences, and mathematics in particular, require the acquisition and coordination of three kinds of knowledge: *Conceptual Knowledge*, *Procedural Knowledge* and *Utilization Knowledge*. These comprise, respectively, "the ability to understand the principles that underpin the problem; the ability to carry out a sequence of actions to solve a problem; and, the ability to know when to apply particular procedures" (Cole & Cole, 1993, p. 482). Research has shown that "… most children arrive at school with some of each kind of knowledge, and cross-cultural research reveals that even societies with no tradition of schooling and literacy use methods of counting and solving arithmetic problems…" (ibid). Clearly, the early acquisition of such knowledge is not dependent upon the child's exposure to a foreign language.

The statement about the international role of English, a quality that has given English its global appeal, merely spells out its importance in international communication, highlighting the advantages of gaining functional literacy in it. That profile and the appeal that English derives from it cannot be denied. It is perceived as the language of power, lending itself to language politics that get intimately connected with economics and resource planning. As such it gets favored over others as the language of instruction (cf. May, 2007). The profile of English as the global language and language of power does not, in and of itself, constitute valid argument for the relegation of African languages as unsuitable for instruction. It serves the politics of power and elitism, to act as the "gatekeeper" for access to the realms of power and economic advantages, rather than to educate (cf. Matiki, 1997; Mtenje, 2002). That does not, *ipso facto*, make it the best medium of instruction

in non-English speaking societies. The perennial negative results and lackluster performance of the students is ample evidence of its unsuitability as medium of instruction.

REVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The other component that merits review in African education is the content. The education in Africa was largely about western civilization. This could be so total that Africans "…were learning more about the rivers and mountains of Europe and America and little, if anything, about our own rivers and hills, from where we would fish and hunt, respectively, for our living (Nyerere, 1968, Warren et al., 1995). The near total exclusion of African studies in schools and colleges, broadly construed, led to reaction as African "renaissance" spurred the rhetoric of self-government, independence, and equality. In brief, how could Africans promote their values when knowledge acquisition remained that of foreign cultures, values, systems of government, history, literary traditions, etc.? The educational program effectively lent credence to the view about the inferiority of African systems of thought or knowledge, of religious beliefs and practices, cultural traditions or norms and values, history, legends, or literary tradition. Commenting on the curriculum of the literature course at the University of Malawi during the 1970s, Moto makes the following, rather pointed criticism:

> There was an obvious leaning toward the continued maintenance of the colonial legacy, seen in the promotion of foreign literature by such novelists, poets and playwrights as Jane Austen, T.S. Eliot and William Shakespeare. This is not to say that there is anything wrong in teaching and learning European literature, but in my view it is not acceptable to teach and learn a foreign literature to the total exclusion of one's own literature in one's own university, and one's own country of birth (Moto, 2009, p. 146).

To redress this imbalance there have been efforts in recent years to have the curricula reflect local knowledge. For instance, at the University of Nairobi individuals like Kimani Gecau, Micere Mugo, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and others tried to establish studies of African literature. The idea of Education for Self-Reliance or Education for Development has led to the engagement of African scholars in investigations of their cultures and technical knowledge, as well as traditional religions and literary arts, all of which had thrived in oral tradition. Drawing upon on-going discussions of the issue Banda (2008) has come to advocate the incorporation of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) into the curriculum to counter-balance the "World Knowledge Systems" (WKS). Banda envisages a curriculum that would constitute a "hybridization" of the two systems of knowledge.

Banda's program, building on previous scholarship on the content of African education (cf. Mahia, 1994; Pottier et. al., 2003; Schuller, 2003; Seepe, 2000; Semali, 1996, 1999; Semali & Stanbach, 1997) seriously challenges educationists

in Africa to address the question of Education for All (EFA). There are two aspects to the lobbying for AIKS in the curriculum. The first is that of being 'reactionary' in that it aims to counter the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge systems. Seepe states this as follows:

> The African Indigenous Knowledge Systems is a counter-hegemonic discourse in the context of African renaissance. This discourse is a reaction against a Western, colonial discourse that completely dismissed African indigenous knowledge systems, as they were posited in reductionist terms and relegated to the realm of insignificance (Seppe, 2000, p. online).

Emeagwali (2003) supports this view. She decries the disinformation embedded in Eurocentric colonial and post-colonial education that includes the selective omission of non-European achievements, inventions and technologies. The other aspect to AIKS is non-reactionary. It is grounded in the realization that ordinary life in the villages provided an education for all. The knowledge involved learning technical skills that were task-related as well as general cultural values, legends and history of the society, religious beliefs and practices, sacred symbols or objects, power relations and societal organization for administration, literary activity (songs of different genres, riddles, proverbs, etc.), etiquette, food production, environmental and ecological conservation, modes of politeness, the nature and determination of one's role and responsibilities, socially constructed gender roles, etc. The education included knowledge in specialized domains that contributed to continued survival and increased prosperity of the society. This related to knowledge in such fields as animal husbandry, metallurgy, meteorology, medicine, agriculture, geography, etc. Such informal education has the characteristic of coding the knowledge systems in non-compartmentalized fashion. It is not divided into diverse subjects, a common feature of formal education. Various scholars have repeatedly upheld the conception of education as including more than formal schooling. Msango et al., (2000, p. 20) try to elaborate on this with the observation that:

> Education covers all aspects of training and initiation into the life of society into which one has been born to live. Schooling, on the other hand, covers only the literacy aspects of training. It deals primarily with literacy and numeracy and the acquisition of knowledge in such disciplines as science, literature, geography, history etc. We learn to read and write and study various subjects in schools, but we are educated in the wider society. The school is only part of that society. Education is therefore bigger than schooling (Msango et. al., 2000, p. 20).

Banda's proposal is to have AIKS integrated into the curriculum to complement WKS. The hybridization would ensure that the children continue to be grounded in their cultural or indigenous knowledge while putting the new systems of knowledge in perspective, noting similarities with, and differences from, their own knowledge culled from the "traditional" education. This would reduce the "culture shock" arising

from entering into formal schooling only to be straitjacketed into foreign norms and practices that are patently incomprehensible, delivered in a foreign language too.

Banda focused on the Chewa ethnic group of Zambia for his case study. Also known as the Nyanja (cf. Mchombo, 2006) the Chewa society is primarily spread across the countries of (eastern) Zambia, Malawi, and (northern) Mozambique. It is arguable that the Chewa stretch further northwards from Mozambique into Tanzania (cf. Nkhoma-Darch, 2005). In fact, sample descriptions of Chingoni spoken in southern Tanzania show it to be remarkably close to Chichewa in lexis, close enough for it to look like a dialectal variation (cf. Ngonyani, 2003). The grammar is even more similar since it is Bantu and, as already noted, Bantu languages display remarkable unity in grammar (cf. Mchombo, 1998b, 2004). Further, as a consequence of migrations and migrant labor practices, the Chewa people are present in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Banda, a Chewa from eastern Zambia, confronted the contradictions and experienced the "culture shock" when he began formal schooling. He states the matter clearly as follows:

> My struggle began when I was told I had to stand when talking to my teachers. This was a contradiction because when in the community, kneeling was the sign of respect and standing when talking to elders was a sign of rudeness. Speaking in my mother tongue, the language of my community, was a punishable offence as such languages were said to be primitive, which meant that everybody in my community was primitive (Banda, 2008, p. 12).

Those problems got compounded further. He states that

> I also learnt that while keeping quiet and looking down and listening when an elder is talking are ways of showing respect and signs of being attentive, they did not mean the same at school. The teacher would describe you as a passive learner and possibly dull (ibid.)

The abrupt shift from traditional and cultural knowledge systems to foreign and contradictory norms negatively impacts self-esteem. The further realization that the use of one's mother tongue, "the language of the community," is proscribed and might constitute a punishable offence on the grounds that such languages, hence their speakers too, were primitive worsened identity crisis and escalated the devaluation of self-worth and, in at least one case, led to grave consequences.[9]

The incorporation of AIKS into the curriculum merits serious review. It would contribute to robust development of African Studies in the educational programs and to the efforts to "decolonize of the mind." It would boost the knowledge base of the African academy, eliminate the image of education as serving to produce culturally alienated elites, and counter the criticism that Moto made about the literature curriculum at the University of Malawi. It would lead to cultural emancipation.

The codification of AIKS will be as laborious and wide-ranging as that of other cultures or embodied in WKS. However, it is necessary for appreciation and

validation of African education. In his study, Banda pays special attention to Chewa cultural practices, in particular, the Nyau dance and its masks for the men folk and the *chinamwali* initiation ceremony for girls who have come of age. He analyzes how the *Nyau* and *chinamwali* secret schools could be related to the formal schools. The *Nyau* dance, popularly known as *Gule Wamkulu* (Great/Big Dance), does partly entertain but was, primarily, a form of initiation of their members into an exalted status of adulthood. The dances and rites signified a change of status in society and contributed towards the preservation of the society's identity. The masked characters serve to educate, inform, instruct and communicate various messages to the local communities. They constitute a mode of transmission of community norms, values and traditions. Further, as noted by Korpela (2011) this oral communication "forms the basis of traditional authority as a system of influence and power in Malawi" (Korpela, 2011, p. 23). Further, *Nyau* played a role in Chewa society as a form of resistance to the colonial government, missionaries, and Ngoni invaders from southern Africa.

The importance of *Nyau* to Chewa society has been detailed in various studies (cf. Rangeley, 1949, 1950; Rau, 1979; Rita-Ferreira, 1968; Schoffeleers, 1973, 1976; Schoffeleers & Linden, 1972). It had a religious dimension to it too, reflecting the spirit world. In fact, when the individuals performing the Nyau dance are donned in their masks and costumes, they are referred to as *ziwanda*, spirits.[10] The religious significance of *Nyau* had to do with the invocation of departed spirits upon special occasions. The Chewa, not alone in this regard, tended to believe in the existence of a connection between the living and the dead with the spirits of the dead remaining active and overseeing the activities of the living. The spirits also act as a medium between the Chewa people and their Supreme God, known variously as *Namalenga*, creator, *Mphambe,* thunder, *Chauta*, *Chisumphi*, *Mulungu*. Thus, *Gule Wamkulu* performances and rites "…ensure a harmonious and symbiotic relationship between the Chewa and the appeased spirits and God. Hence, it was imperative for the Chewa to stick to the tradition because it had religious anecdotes…" (Daimon op.cit. 4), offering extra refutation of "…the clamorous blunder whereby Africans were considered for centuries to be polytheists, while in actual fact the spirits or other entities which their religions refer to are considered to act as intermediaries between a single supreme being - who has various names – and human beings" (Mezzana, op. cit. 2).

The Chewa also used *Gule Wamkulu* to highlight, in burlesque, various aspects of their society as well as changes occurring in the land. Thus, when people from abroad became part of the Chewa land, either as colonialists, traders (including slavery), invaders (as was the case with the Ngoni), the *Nyau* created masks for *mzungu,* the white person, *dona,* female white person, *m'mwenye,* the Indian/Asian, etc. The introduction of cows into Chewa society by the Ngoni saw the formation of a "Nyau cow" just as there was a mask of Jere (a Ngoni) (cf. Makumbi, 1975).

The *Nyau* burlesque incurred the wrath of the Catholic Church with the introduction of a female mask of *Maliya*, a male mask of *Simoni* and one of *Yosefe*. These were

used "…in anti-Christian parodies of the Virgin Mary, the apostle Simon and Joseph, Mary's husband, respectively" (Banda, op. cit. 120). Thus, the masks were a way of resisting the imposition of the missionary education, somewhat reminiscent of "independent African churches" and other local religious movements formed in the latter half of the 19th century that sought to establish cultural, spiritual, and political autonomy if not actual liberation from colonial dominion (cf. Mezzana op. cit.). For the Chewa this sacrilegious ridiculing of Christian religion, through masks and dancers named after the most "sacred" or "honored and revered" personages in Christian doctrine, served to antagonize that aspect of Chewa culture with western religion and education. The Christianization of African societies and the education of African children that began with missionary activities and colonialism produced much conflict eventually forcing them to forsake their traditional beliefs and their identity. This has not abated with contemporary societal transformations since "… Christian churches have continued with their evangelization crusade preaching that such practices like *Nyau* dances in the bush are practices that are anchored in heathenism thus they are demonic and pagan. Hence, society has tended to hate/ dislike the traditions and anything that has to do with Chewa rituals" (Daimon, op. cit. 6). *Chinamwali,* as were the rest of African cultural practices or knowledge systems, guilty by association, had to equally get trampled by the wheels of "civilization," imparted through education.

The argument here is that such knowledge should be reclaimed and integrated into the school curriculum. This is the essence of Banda's recommendation for "hybridization" of the curricula of formal education. The hybridization exploits the view that knowledge production is to be treated as "negotiated translation" rather than something that is "transferred" from one "superior" system of education to another "backward" education system. This is consonant with the Culture-based curriculum model (cf. Barnhardt et.al., 2005) and contrasts with the positivist conception of the nature of knowledge, characterized in the following statement:

> The positivist view that knowledge is unitary and systematized explains why scientists continue to regard science as superior to local bodies of knowledge, and why they believe that their superior knowledge can easily be transferred, indeed needs to be transferred, in order to replace 'backward' local [indigenous] Knowledge (Pottier et al., 2003, p. 15).

The formulation of culture-based curricula incorporating a hybridization of the knowledge systems would be a major step towards the achievement of education for all in Africa. In fact, Korpela (2011) studying the effectiveness of the oral performance of *Nyau* masquerade (*Gule Wamkulu*) to communicate messages about HIV/AIDS in Malawi, distinct from the highly formal mode of communication utilized by public health officials, with the backing of international organizations, proposes a version of such hybridization. He states that such oral tradition "is found all over the world, in a variety of forms, and every time constituting a world of performance with its own signs, meanings, and interpretations. Moving towards

an understanding of the context of this world is essential to the construction and utilization of a more meaningful education dialogue" (Korpela, 2011, p. 52).

Banda does not dwell on the issue of language in education, leaving that matter largely implicit. However, redressing that matter along the lines indicated above, taking it in tandem with a program that addresses the "hybridization" suggestion appropriately elaborated and promoted through policy formulation and financial support, should enhance the achievement of education for all while simultaneously restoring and promoting human rights in education. Naturally, there is need for massive political will and economic investment for the program to get realized, not easily countenanced in the age of "globalization."

GLOBAL POLITICS

Bamgbose (1991) claims that the policies of language in education in Africa provide the best illustration of *an inheritance situation*. This has to do with "… how the colonial experience continues to shape and define post-colonial problems and practices" (Bamgbose, 1991, p. 69). This is exemplified in the formulation of policies in education that merely carry out the logic and practices of the past. In the case of the language in education policies, Bamgbose ruefully observes that

> All former British colonies have English, all former French and Belgian colonies have French, all former Portuguese colonies have Portuguese and the only former Spanish colony has Spanish (ibid)[11].

In addition, those countries that had come under the influence of Arabs, leading to the establishment of Islam, tend to have Arabic as a school subject or as a medium of instruction, besides its status as an/the official language and, certainly, as the language of religion. Clearly, the inheritance situation must have some rationale for its perpetuation. In recent times, the finger has pointed at "globalization." In its core usage the term has come to reflect the porousness of various nations in the world to the intrusion of foreign capital and the financial institutions' access to their local resources, human or material. Soros points out that

> The salient feature of globalization is that it allows financial capital to move freely; by contrast, the movement of people remains heavily regulated. Since capital is an essential ingredient of production, individual countries must compete to attract it; this inhibits their ability to tax and regulate it. Under the influence of globalization, the character of our economic and social arrangements has undergone a radical transformation. The ability of capital to go elsewhere undermines the ability of the state to exercise control over the economy (Soros, 2002, p. 3).

Globalization has power asymmetry built into it in that the nations with the financial capital have the power to influence events and control resources in the weaker nations. In many respects colonialism constituted initial efforts at globalization. Although

the immediate association of "globalization" has to do with "economic and social" arrangements that have allowed financial capital to move "freely" across nations, its impact is seen as extending to other social aspects as well. These have included sports (cf. Giulianotte & Robertson, 2009), trade imbalances, and the destruction of culture in the weaker nations. Mazrui (2001) dichotomized globalization into economic and cultural. The main players in the economic globalization are the transnational and multinational corporations seeking to extend the horizons for their markets for raw materials. On the other hand, cultural globalization contributes to the erosion of indigenous cultures and indigenous languages. In this quest the form of education in the economically weaker nations has proved useful. Education requires massive financial investment and, for economically weaker nations facing a multitude of problems on virtually every front of state building and administration, international aid is a source of support. The aid normally has come with conditions, traditionally in the form of "structural adjustment programs" and, in some cases, the requirement that the receiving countries, especially in Africa, abide by certain stipulations about respect of "human rights." The content of that is normally determined by the donor nations.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have, traditionally, been the organizations that have channeled the aid. As such the World Bank has certainly been viewed as "…one of the greatest agents of globalization…" (Mazrui, op. cit. 43). The aid to education in Africa has, inevitably, had to go through the strictures of World Bank conditions. On the issue of language in education while the World Bank has advocated the use of indigenous languages, especially in the lower levels of schooling, it still maintains the belief that the use of English as medium of instruction improves the quality of education. Mazrui notes that "..it is no coincidence that soon after Tanzania had submitted to the clutches of the World Bank and IMF in the 1980s, the British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) moved in, in full force, to launch the multi-million dollar English Language Teaching Support Project.." (ibid, p. 49).

Colonialists have retained much interest in maintaining their economic and cultural presence in their former colonies. An effective method to achieve that has been through the financial aid provided to support the continued flourishing of their languages. Their assumed importance to the improvement of academic standards contributes to the realization of that goal.

The use of Europeans languages is further boosted by local attitudes towards education, especially relating to the question of language of instruction. The arguments for retention of English as language of instruction include the view that it is the language of globalization; it is the language of opportunity and work; it eliminates isolation from the world; parents prefer to have their children taught in English because the language will give opportunities to gain employment; finally, that it would be costly to translate the books into the local languages. The arguments are not merely confined to English. The majority of them apply to the use of European languages in education in general. The situation has held for Portuguese

in Mozambique. The situation there is, in principle and in practice, comparable to the attitudes about English, modulo the utility to prevent isolation from the rest of the word. Henriksen has noted that "…. one of the beliefs which still persists is that the schools should do all within their power to improve the standard of Portuguese language teaching and learning, instead of wasting the meagre resources on languages that are not going to lead anywhere in academic, professional and economic terms. The ideology is surely inspired by an assimilationist position, that is, the idea that everyone, regardless of his or her mother tongue should speak the official language of the country" (cf. Henriksen, 2010, p. 22).

These arguments have some force to them but do not constitute a rational basis for the retention of the colonial languages as languages of instruction. They point to the utility of the foreign languages for international communication, but as foreign languages. Their usefulness as languages of instruction is not predicated on their inherent quality to improve academic standards, although that might be incidental; but, rather, on the legacy of their centrality to upward mobility and access to arenas of power. The profile of English as the language of globalization and internationalism has led to the promotion of English education in various countries including those formerly under French/Belgian colonialism (e.g. Rwanda) and under Portuguese rule (e.g. Mozambique). The view is that the language will "…enhance equal participation in the globalization process…" (ibid. p. 30). In reality the reasoning is fallacious. Globalization has to do with capital, access to markets, extraction of raw materials etc. While capital has free movement, Soros does point out that " … the movement of people remains heavily regulated" (Soros op. cit.). Put bluntly, the advantages of proficiency in English or the European languages do not immediately translate into a leveling of the "globalization playing field." The control on human movement deprives globalization of the free trade doctrine. As Chomsky has pointed out:

> Free movement of people is a core component of free trade. As for free movement of capital, that's a totally different matter. Unlike persons of flesh and blood, capital has no rights, at least by Enlightenment/classical liberal standards. As soon as we bring up the matter of free movement of capital, we have to face the fact that although in principle people are at least equal in rights, in a just society, talk of capital conceals the reality: we are speaking of owners of capital, who are vastly unequal in power, naturally (Chomsky, 2006, p. 111).

In other words, the international role of English does not mean that individuals immediately get the advantage of traveling just because they are fluent in it even when they are lacking in knowledge obtained from the "right" education. The use of those languages in education merely serves the function of enhancing the influence of the former colonial powers (cf. Carstensen, 2007). The Department for International Development (DfID) in the United Kingdom is, arguably, always on hand to promote studies and uses of English, more so given its admonition against

a narrow focus on a minority language of instruction that "may reinforce social and economic marginalization" (Gacheche, 2010, p. 9).

There is an instructive story about French too, from Seychelles. Brock-Utne tells of a Mr. Ferrari, the leader of a new Institute for Democracy formed to distribute information on democratic methods of governance. He revealed to her that at some stage he had sought financial help from a development agency in France to further the work of the Institute. The French agency promised the aid on the condition that the Institute would use French as the medium of communication and would work for the strengthening of the French language in the Seychelles, and distribute their brochures also in French! Mr. Ferrari declined the offer (cf. Brock-Utne, 2007). It is time that African leaders got to seriously back up their stated commitment to "… re-assert and identify what they had lost as a consequence of a colonial cultural and social assault" (Moto, op. cit.) with positive action. This should begin with a serious review of *the inheritance situation.* The question of language in education and the institution of curricula that promote (human) rights in education to guarantee education for all will be a crucial component in the effort.

The arguments based on globalization, international profile of European languages, scarcity or total lack of written material or of trained teachers should serve as a call to action rather than be used as the subterfuge for continued deferment of the project. Other nations invest in the promotion of their cultural and linguistic heritage. African nations need to invest in the education of the youth and in a program of education for all. Development will be achieved when the education is not for the production of "culturally alienated elites." A statement attributed to a Minister responsible for Education in Tanzania that the government "…did not have money to do experiments and 'waste' the few resources on the language of instruction. 'The little money that is available will be spent on improving the quality of education and not on the language of instruction'" (Brock-Utne, 2012, p. 6) must be viewed as defeatist. It is ironic especially coming from a Minister responsible for Education in the very country that set the example of promoting the use of an African language, Kiswahili, as language of instruction. Scheduling the reforms for when the economic situation will improve, or there will be political support for them, amounts to deferment of the program to perpetuity.

NOTES

[1] I owe a special debt of gratitude to Zehlia Babaci-Wilhite for stimulating discussions of the issue of languages of instruction and human rights in education in Africa, and for providing the occasion to research into this topic. I am grateful to H. Samy Alim, Louisa Chinyavu, Monica Kahumburu, David Kyeu, Francis Moto, Deo Ngonyani, Edwin Okong'o, and Ruth Okubo for comments and valuable discussions on earlier versions of this work. None of them is to be blamed for any mistakes or inaccuracies. Responsibility for those and all the views expressed in this paper falls squarely on me.

[2] I was not been able to secure a copy of a book that has the exact wording of the introduction. This reproduction, from memory of my days in high (secondary) school, is very close to what it said, almost verbatim. There was so much anger and frustration at it that some readers at my school tore out that page from some of the books or wrote scurrilous angry rejoinders to it in other books. Longmans

Simplified English Series must have had feedback from various countries because the wording was changed in latter issues. While the modified version conveyed the same message the language was less 'blunt' or condescending.

3 I am indebted to Ruth Okubo for drawing my attention to the bilingual education offered to children of immigrants from Central and South America in some elementary schools in California. Brice & Roseberry-McKibbin (2001) also discuss a bilingual approach for teaching students with special needs in Canada, an approach that they referred to as Jacobson's New Concurrent Approach for bilingual special educators.

4 A song that was taught to school children in Malawi in the1950s through the 1960s and probably into the 1970s extolled the awesome intelligence and advanced culture of the Europeans as evidenced by their invention of the airplane. Moto provides the words of the song and a translation in his book. Reproducing Moto's actual words, he says the Malawian education system ensured that "the mighty power and intellect of the white man was immortalized through song. Up to today I clearly remember a song we sang as children, which categorically stated:

Azungu nzeru, Apanga ndege, Si kanthu kena, Koma ndi khama. (White people are clever, They manufacture planes, It is for no other reason, But pure insistence)" (Moto, 2009, p. 88-86)

5 In the late 1990s, when Bill Clinton was president of the United States, The CBS news magazine program, 60 Minutes, aired an episode called "The Language Factor." It dealt with how the language used by African American youth was not "proper English," how it minimized their opportunities for meaningful employment, and restricted them to the most menial of jobs. Some of the attitudes expressed included that the language is so stereotyped or stigmatized that it is associated with ignorance or lack of education.

Shortly after the program aired, but unrelated to it, there was outburst occasioned by the proposal by the Oakland Unified School District in California to sensitize African American students to the difference between the African American variety of English, called Ebonics, and "proper or standard" English.

6 Alim & Smitherman (2012) provide a more detailed examination of the issue of language in education in the United States. Specifically, the extent to which the education system requires of Black students that they learn "standard English," the "language and communicative norms of those in power…" (Alim & Smitherman, 2012, p. 171)

7 Monica Kahumburu pointed out to me that there is a difference between China and Africa in that China had a written form of the language while African languages were preliterate. Africans had, for a long time, depended on oral transmission of knowledge. As such, the situations in Africa and China might not be entirely comparable. It is not clear that this undermines the observation made about language in education policies discussed here.

8 Louisa Chinyavu in Nairobi brought to my attention in December 2013 the fact that there had been a feature on NTV news in Kenya about a teacher who made the decision to teach in Luo. When his students were interviewed they said that they preferred that to being taught in English since they could understand the material better.

9 Brocke-Utne (2012b) noted that the Tanzanian newspaper Majira, on 18 May 2010, had an article with the shocking heading 'Mwanafunzi afa akifanya adhabu' (A student died while he was being punished). The article told that a Form II student, Charles Wabea (16) from Luchelele secondary school died while performing a punishment meted out to him by his teacher for speaking Kiswahili in class. He was to dig 20 buckets of soil from a pit and the pit collapsed on him.

10 When the Nyau performers don their masks and costumes and they become ziwanda, spirits, their identity is not to be revealed. They "mask" their voices when they sing as well as their gait when they walk into, and out of, the dance arena. They are viewed as the spirits that they represent.

11 Deo Ngonyani (p.c.) pointed out the obvious fact that even after independence Africans are referred to, and are happy to refer to themselves, as Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone. Yet, there is no Swahilophone or any such thing.

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